

Paula Massey
Naugatuck Valley Community College Alumni 2010

Good Evening Co-chairs Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for allowing me the time to testify on bill HB 6380. My name is Paula Massey and I am a graduate of Naugatuck Valley Community College and a current student at UCONN Waterbury. I come before you to express my opposition to the proposed budget reductions in the Governor's budget for the Connecticut Community Colleges. I chose to attend a Community College for two simple reasons – affordability and the variety of offered programs. Paying for college myself, I needed to attend an institution that was affordable. I found this in Naugatuck Valley Community College. The Horticulture program attracted me because the cost of a four year university was too expensive and I was simply unable to pay tuition. The programs and costs at NVCC allowed me to achieve my dream of going to college.

Unfortunately, there is a stigma that Community College is not really “college”. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Students at community colleges receive a quality college education with the accompanying higher cost of a four year university. Education is vital to our future as it prepares students to enter the workforce, increase their career prospects and allows students to transfer to four year institutions. Obtaining an associate's degree from a Community College allowed me to save money and transfer my credits seamlessly into a four year degree at the University of Connecticut. Coming out of high school, I was just an average student and Naugatuck Valley Community College allowed me to become not just a better student but also a well rounded person. The Student Services at NVCC provided the support and guidance that allowed me to succeed. Student Activities is the one service that stands out the most, which without that I would probably not be before you. I was very quiet when I started at NVCC but thanks to Student Activities, I became more comfortable talking to people. My experience at Naugatuck Valley Community College was priceless and truly changed me for the better. The skills I acquired there will help me succeed for the rest of my life. The NVCC Counseling Center made the transition from NVCC to UCONN Waterbury seamless. Once NVCC Staff knew my interests, they made a phone call on my behalf and set me up with a UCONN Advisor. With the articulation agreements between the Community Colleges and UCONN, all of NVCC credits were accepted and now I have only 6 more classes until I graduate with a bachelor's degree!

After receiving a bachelor's I plan to obtain a master's degree in education so that I hopefully work at a Community College to provide future students with the same great experience that I had. I hope that you really listen to the stories that are being told and really come to appreciate the value of community colleges, how they impact students and how ultimately we help the Connecticut economy. I am here to ensure that all community colleges continue to provide the same quality, affordable education. I implore the legislature not to approve a reduced budget for the Community Colleges. The futures of students just like me depend on having access to an affordable and quality education that prepares us for the workforce so we can continue to contribute to the economic well being of Connecticut. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,
Paula Massey